REMARKS

Claims 12-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12 and 14-15 are amended, claims 1-11 are canceled, without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and claims 18-23 are added. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claims 1-4, 7-9, 12 and 15 for informalities. The objection to canceled claims 1-9 is moot. Claims 12 and 15 are amended to obviate the objection. Claim 16 is also amended to be consistent with other claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejection of canceled claims 1-11 is moot. Claims 12, and 14 are amended to obviate the rejection. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2 and 4-17 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,309,243 to Tsai. The rejection of canceled claims 1, 2 and 4-11 is moot. This rejection of the remaining claims is respectfully traversed.

Method claim 12 recites performing a first exposure operation of the photoreceptor at a fixed first exposure amount after insecurity period of the photoreceptor device from beginning a prepare operation of exposure to obtain a first output, the fixed first exposure amount being set without calculating the fixed first exposure amount. Claim 12 further recites selecting the signal level closest to a predetermined exposure amount as a selected exposure amount and changing the selected exposure amount by a prescribed about smaller than a difference between the fixed first exposure amount and the fixed second exposure amount. These features are described in the specification at, for example, page 5, line 34-page 8, line 9. For example, signal levels corresponding to exposure amount S, M and L are compared, and the value closest to the predetermined exposure amount is selected. Then, the

selected exposure amount is changed by a prescribed value α, to calculate the optimum exposure amount.

Tsai does not teach or suggest a way of calculating an optimum exposure amount for the exposure. Tsai teaches that the normal exposure level, which corresponds to an optimum exposure amount recited in claim 12, is already calculated by the time of the prepare operation of the exposure. That is, the values N, N+1, and N-1 are <u>predetermined</u>, and one of them is selected as the <u>optimum</u> exposure value. Therefore, in Tsai, there is no calculation after one of the values is selected.

In addition, as described at col. 3, lines 56-63, Tsai teaches that the data from the N+1 exposure range image is checked to determine if it properly corresponds to double the N exposure range image data. If it does not, the data from the N+1 exposures range image is <u>replaced</u> with data from an N+1/2 exposure range, where N+1/2 is an exposure range having an amount of light equal to the geometric mean between N and N+1. Therefore, Tsai does <u>not</u> teach or suggest calculating the optimum value by selecting a predetermined exposure value and changing the selected exposure value by a prescribed amount, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is patentable over Tsai.

Claims 13-17 are patentable at least for their dependence on allowable base claim 12, as well as for the additional features they recite.

As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tsai in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,162,913 to Chatenever et al. (Chatenever). This rejection is moot with respect to canceled claim 3.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

New claim 18 recites features similar to those of canceled claim 1. In particular, claim 18 recites, *inter alia*, a calculation device calculates the exposure in short period after

beginning a prepare operation of exposure to be set by the setting device, wherein the calculation device compares the first output and the second output and the one closest to tha predetermined exposure amount is selected as a selected exposure amount, and wherein the selected exposure amount is changed by a prescribed value that is smaller than a difference between the fixed first exposure amount and the fixed second exposure amount.
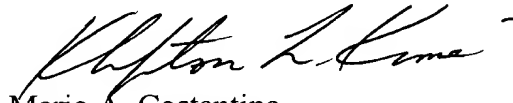
Similar to claim 12, Tsai does not teach or suggest these features. Accordingly, claim 18 is patentable over the applied references.

New claims 19-23 recite features similar to canceled claims 2-6. Claims 19-23 are patentable at least for their dependence on claim 18, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims and 12-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment:
    Request for Continued Examination

Date: March 2, 2006

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